

Facts About Parkinson's



April is Parkinson's Awareness Month



Everything's harder when
your body turns against you.

What is Parkinson's?

Parkinson's is a neurodegenerative disease. Movement is controlled by dopamine, a chemical that carries signals between the nerves and the brain. When cells that normally produce dopamine die, the symptoms of Parkinson's appear.

Who gets Parkinson's?

Parkinson's affects approximately 100,000 Canadians and 6.3 million people worldwide; men and women from all ethnic backgrounds. Although the average age of onset is 60, it also affects people as young as 30 and 40 (called Young-Onset Parkinson's).

How is Parkinson's Diagnosed?

A diagnosis of Parkinson's takes time. There are no x-rays or tests to confirm Parkinson's; a diagnosis is made after a thorough assessment by a neurologist (a specialist trained in Parkinson's).

What are the symptoms of Parkinson's?

The most common symptoms are: tremor, slowness and stiffness, balance problems and/or rigidity of the muscles. Other symptoms include: fatigue, soft speech, writing problems, stooped posture, constipation, sleep disturbances, and depression.

Is there a cure for Parkinson's?

Currently there is no cure. But there are many promising research projects under way, including finding and understanding the causes and developing better treatments. Many researchers now claim that a cure can be found in the next ten to fifteen years. In the last four years Parkinson Society Canada has contributed just over \$4.25 million in new research grants.

How is Parkinson's treated?

Parkinson's is treated with medication, which can reduce symptoms, but may cause side effects. Physical and occupational therapy and exercise are also helpful. As the disease advances, medications will need to be adjusted. A small percentage of people with Parkinson's may benefit from brain surgery.



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